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Summary record of the 48th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 19 March 2001 at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kelapile (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Botswana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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In the absence of Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala), Mr. Kelapile (Botswana), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 116: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations *(continued)*

Agenda item 123: Human resources management *(continued)*

Gratis personnel (A/55/728; A/C.5/55/13 and A/C.5/55/36)

1. **Mr. Beissel** (Director, Operational Services Division) said that the documents before the Committee contained three quarterly reports of the Secretary-General on the use of gratis personnel, covering the three quarters from 1 April 2000 to 31 December 2000, as well an annual report covering the period from 1 October 1999 to 30 September 2000. The most recent quarterly report showed that only two type II gratis personnel remained employed by the Organization and their contracts would be allowed to continue until they expired.

2. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the Committee should take note of the reports of the Secretary-General.

Agenda item 138: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East *(continued)*

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon *(continued)* (A/55/482/Add.1)

3. **Mr. Yeo** (Director, Peacekeeping Financing Division) said that document A/55/482/Add.1 contained a second revised budget for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001. The new revision of the first revised budget adopted in General Assembly resolution 55/180 of 19 December 2000 was occasioned by the fact that some contingents would, as it turned out, not be deployed. The budget had therefore been reduced by $26,437,900 to $207,154,194 and 31 posts had been suppressed. He pointed out that such a revision would normally not be submitted to the Committee at the current stage; the revised amounts would usually simply be reflected in the performance report. In the present case, however, a revised budget had exceptionally been prepared and submitted in response to concerns raised by a number of delegations, mainly in connection with the assessments relating to the mission. He noted that the action to be taken by the General Assembly was set out in paragraph 9 of the report.

4. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee agreed with the proposals of the Secretary-General as outlined in paragraph 9 of the report. He pointed out that the Fifth Committee would be reviewing all peacekeeping operations in May and that action by it on the matter could be deferred until that review. He noted that the Security Council had renewed the mission of UNIFIL to 31 July 2001 and that the Secretary-General would probably inform the General Assembly about assessments at its next session.

5. **Mr. Diab** (Lebanon) proposed that consideration of the matter should be deferred until May, as the budget might be revised again with a new extension of the mission's mandate.

6. **Mr. Yeo** (Director, Peacekeeping Financing Division) said that it would be technically possible for the Committee to defer action on the matter until May. If the Committee took action now, the Secretariat would be able to revise the assessments sooner.

7. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, bearing in mind the technical clarifications offered by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the representative of the Secretariat, he supported the proposal made by the representative of Lebanon to defer consideration of the matter.

8. **Mr. Diab** (Lebanon) pointed out that the information provided by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the representative of the Secretariat indicated that there were no financial implications involved in postponing consideration of the matter.

9. **Mr. Al-Abbi** (United Arab Emirates), speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that his Group had no objection to the request made by the representative of Lebanon, although he had some

concern about what changes in the situation might occur from the present until May.

10. **Mr. Lenefors** (Sweden) requested more information about the financial implications of postponing action on the matter.

11. **Mr. Yeo** (Director, Peacekeeping Financing Division) said that, owing to the deployment changes, the budget resources for UNIFIL had already been reduced to the level indicated in the report. The main concern at present was the assessments for the current year. If the issue was deferred, there would still be sufficient funds to maintain the mission at the current level, and the new assessments would be worked out when the Committee took action on the matter.

12. **The Chairman** said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the proposal made by the representative of Lebanon to defer action on the matter.

13. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 176: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (A/55/666 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/55/688 and Add.1)

14. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the Advisory Committee's reports (A/55/688 and Add.1) on the Secretary-General's proposals for the financing of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). In its first report (A/55/688) the Advisory Committee had, on the basis of the Secretary-General's initial estimates (A/55/666), recommended the assessment and commitment of $150 million gross for the mission. A careful review of the Secretary-General's revised estimates (A/55/666/Add.1) had led the Advisory Committee to revise those estimates downwards by 6 per cent and to recommend in its second report (A/55/688/Add.1) the commitment and assessment by the General Assembly of an additional $30 million gross for the mission. The Advisory Committee's report also contained a number of observations for the Secretariat that it hoped would be taken into account in preparing the next estimates.

15. **Mr. Lenefors** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and the EFTA country Iceland, said that the European Union remained strongly committed to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security, which was the primary role of the United Nations. In that connection the European Union and associated countries had made considerable contributions to peacekeeping operations every year. It was therefore of the utmost importance that the most effective administrative and budgetary arrangements be made for peacekeeping operations. The Secretariat must have the resources and capabilities needed to carry out the mandates assigned by Member States.

16. The European Union welcomed the clarifications of the structure of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and the Secretary-General's intention to review, in the light of experience, the operations of the various political offices. The Union shared the Advisory Committee's concern regarding the need to ensure the presence of qualified personnel to implement all the requirements of the contingent-owned equipment reimbursement procedures and regarding the difficulties of recruiting qualified civilian personnel in a timely manner. The Union also agreed with the Advisory Committee's suggestion that greater use should be made of United Nations Volunteers and the recommendation that the General Assembly should approve a commitment and assessment of $180 million, inclusive of the $150 million already approved in General Assembly resolution 55/237.

17. **Mr. Manczyk** (Poland) said that Poland attached great importance to United Nations peacekeeping operations and had long been an important troop-contributing country. Peacekeeping operations needed timely and effective administrative support to strengthen the Organization's capacity for planning and management. The mission structure of UNMEE, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report (A/55/666/Add.1), was clearly still a matter of concern, both to the Secretary-General and to the Polish delegation, and further streamlining was still needed. His delegation therefore welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to review the components of the mission and hoped that the new structure would be reflected in the next set of estimates. He shared the Advisory Committee's concern with regard to the contingent-owned equipment verification arrangements and agreed that it was important to ensure the availability of qualified personnel to implement the

reimbursement procedures related to those arrangements. He agreed, in connection with the difficulties in recruiting qualified civilian personnel, that greater use should be made of United Nations Volunteers, especially in the fields of human rights and public information. With regard to operational requirements for the mission, he agreed that the request for land and air support was justified.

18. **Ms. Merchant** (Norway) said that peacekeeping was a core task of the United Nations. Norway remained committed to supporting United Nations peacekeeping missions and had contributed to many trust funds established over the years in connection with such missions. The peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea was a most significant achievement and her delegation welcomed the swift and efficient deployment effected by UNMEE and the troop-contributing countries so far. In connection with the Advisory Committee's request for further clarification on the structure of the mission, Norway welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to review, in the light of experience, the operation of the various political offices referred to in his report (A/55/666).

19. Stressing the close relationship between UNMEE and the Boundary Commission established under the peace agreement and the fact that termination of the mission's work required completion of the delimitation and demarcation of the Ethiopian-Eritrean border, she urged the speedy establishment of the Commission and the start-up of its work as a cost-effective use of resources. Norway agreed with the Advisory Committee that the Civil/Military Coordination Centre would be a useful forum and strengthen collaboration among all participants in the mission concerning matters of staff security. Norway also strongly supported the establishment of a mine action centre and had contributed $474,174 to support UNMEE mine-clearing activities. Her delegation also shared the Advisory Committee's concern regarding the difficulties in recruiting qualified civilian personnel and agreed that the mission should explore opportunities to make greater use of United Nations Volunteers. Norway concurred with the Advisory Committee's recommendation to approve the appropriation and assessment of $180 million for the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001, inclusive of the commitment authority of $150 million gross already approved by the General Assembly in resolution 55/237.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.